

# Getting to Know Your Bible

## Lesson 3

How Was the Bible Developed and Protected? (Continued)

<b>Quick Review of Lesson 2</b>	<p>5. The time covered in the book of Genesis (2352 lunar years) is about 37 % of the time since Adam was created until today, A.D. 2022.</p> <p>6. Not in your notes, but covered in class, we discovered that the seeds of the nine main themes in the Bible were first planted in Genesis 1 – 15. Those nine themes are God, the Lord, the Spirit, man, angels, sin, salvation, Israel, and the Church. The LORD will address these themes repeatedly all the way through the Bible through the book of Revelation to give us all the information we will ever need to know about them. All other themes in the Bible fall under one of these themes as sub-themes and will be planted and developed just as the major themes are developed through the entire Bible.</p> <p>7. We discovered the men whom the LORD used to actually write the WORD of God on paper.</p> <p>8. We discovered that the LORD dictated to Moses the information in Genesis and Leviticus. We also discovered that Exodus was Moses' eyewitness record of his interaction with the LORD and life with the Nation of Israel.</p> <p>9. At the end of the lesson, we discovered that at the end of the first year out of Egypt, it was time for the Tabernacle complex to be put together on Nissan 1<sup>st</sup>. On that day, Moses put the written original scrolls of Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus in the Ark of the Covenant/Testimony. Then, he placed it in the Holy of Holies behind the Veil. Here is the chart presented on the screen but not in the notes as a visual to show the timing of the setup of the Tabernacle complex.</p> <div><div><div>Nissan 15th Departure from Egypt</div><div>3 months / 90 days Journey to Mount Sinai</div></div><div><div>Arrival at Mount Sinai</div><div>14 days short of one year</div><div>9 months Stay at Mount Sinai and construction of the Tabernacle Complex</div></div><div><div>Nissan 1st Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus Completed</div><div>Tabernacle Setup</div></div></div> <p>10. We noted that when placing the three books in the Ark, the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy would not be recorded and completed by Moses for another 38 - 39 years.</p> <p>11. We ended the lesson by asking two questions. “What is the significance of the three books being placed in the Ark of the Covenant/Testament?” “Who protected the books through the years?” (The Caretakers)</p>
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### The Significance is Two-fold

#### First: THE SIGNIFICANCE IS IN THE LORD's NAME OF THE ARK!

Without the Books of the WORD of God, the ARK was JUST AN EMPTY BOX. Yes, the LORD would still have hovered His Shekinah Glory above the Mercy Seat top on the box.

The LORD would indeed not have named it the ARK OF THE COVENANT or the ARK of the TESTIMONY if HIS COVENANT/TESTIMONY was not in it.

The ARK was named after its contents – the Covenant or Testimony of the WORD of God.  
GENESIS – EXODUS – LEVITICUS

#### Second: THE SIGNIFICANCE IS IN THE CARETAKERS OF THE ARK!

The only caretakers of the Ark of the Covenant were the priests who were directly descended from Aaron – a very small group.

Once the books of Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus were in the Ark of the Covenant, they were securely protected by the LORD, the High Priest, and the Tabernacle Priests.

**Here is the development of the protocol for protecting the WORD of God in the Ark of the Covenant/Testimony as revealed by the LORD in Scripture.**

1. After arriving at Mount Sinai, ninety days after leaving Egypt, the LORD instructed Moses to have the people wash and put on their finest clean clothes and come to the foot of the mountain. In Exodus, chapter 20, the people are at the foot of the mountain, and they hear the voice of the LORD giving them the Ten Commandments. It scares them greatly. In Exodus chapter 21 – 23, the LORD gives the instructions for how to live under and within the laws of the Ten Commandments. In Exodus chapter 24, the people of the Nation of Israel accepted the commandments and the covenant with the LORD.
2. In Exodus chapter 25 - 30, the LORD has Moses up on Mount Sinai for forty days. On the mount, the LORD details for Moses the plans for the construction of the Tabernacle complex, including all the furniture and fixtures, offerings to build the complex, oils, clothing, etc. When Moses comes down off the mountain, it is now more than four months since leaving Egypt.
3. In chapter 31, while on the mountain for the first forty days, the LORD tells Moses to put a skillful craftsman by the name of Bezalel in charge of the complete build. Moses comes off the mountain and puts Bezalel in charge. Bezalel is from the tribe of Judah. All the twelve tribes will contribute to the build and participate in constructing everything that is to be in the Tabernacle complex. The important point in this note is that men and women from every tribe of Israel touched everything constructed for the Tabernacle complex, even those things which were to be the holiest of holy things to the LORD. Bezalel started the project, taking less than eight months to complete. We will skip over the hiccup of the golden calf debacle in chapter 32 that occurred while Moses was on the mount the second forty days when the tablets of the Ten Commandments were carved out a second time by Moses because he broke the ones the LORD carved. After all the instructions from the LORD, the offering is taken, and Bezalel, along with Oholiab, assigns the jobs and puts the people to work building the complex from every tribe of Israel.
4. Once everything for the Tabernacle complex is completed by the hands of the Israelites from all the tribes of Israel, the rules are about to change forever concerning who can touch the items. On the first day, of the first month, of the second year, Nissan 1<sup>st</sup>, once the Tabernacle complex is dedicated and consecrated by Moses according to the LORD's instructions, from then on, only the tribe of Levi can touch the items. To top that off, not every Levite can touch every part. The LORD's instructions for the dedication and consecration of the Tabernacle complex are in Exodus 29 and 40, Leviticus 8 – 9, and Numbers 3 – 4.
5. Numbers 3 – 4 tell us which Levites can touch which parts of the Tabernacle complex and still be safe from the wrath of the LORD. No one could touch the Tabernacle items without facing the wrath of the LORD's decree of death except those who were specifically assigned to those items. The ones who could touch them were Levites, but here are the details about which Levites could touch what items from Numbers 3-4.

Levi, the son of Jacob/Israel, had three sons whose names were Kohath, Merari, and Gershon. These three families, the Kohathites, the Merarites, and the Gershonites, made up the entire tribe of Levi living with Moses at the time. Their whole tribe had males from thirty to fifty years old: the Kohathites had 8,600, Gershonites had 7,500, and Merarites had 6,200. (*Note: The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel, and Amminadab.*)

Aaron was a Kohath, through Amram, and the LORD chose the descendants of Aaron to be the high priests forever and helper priests at the Tabernacle complex. Once dedicated, only the descendants of Aaron could touch the Ark of the Covenant, the Veil, the Table of Show Bread, the Lampstand, the snuffers, oil vessels, utensils, the Golden Altar, the forks, shovels, firepans, and the

basins. When it was time to move, the descendants of Aaron packed these items, covering them fully according to the instruction of the LORD. Then once covered, the rest of the Kohathites would come in and carry these items to the following location and leave them packed to be unpacked by the descendants of Aaron. Excluding Aaron's descendants, the Kohathites were forbidden from entering the Tabernacle proper, where all the holy items were placed. If anyone besides the descendants of Aaron entered the sacred places to see those items, they would immediately die (Numbers 4:20).

Once all the holy items were packed and out of view under the packing, the Gershonites could touch and transport the curtains, the tent of meeting, the screens, doorways, the cords, and equipment (Numbers 4).

At the same time as the Gershonites are moving their items, the Merarites would carry the pillars, sockets, pegs, cords, and the rest of the equipment (Numbers 4).

The descendants of Aaron could touch everything; however, the other three groups could only touch their assigned items or die. Therefore, if any of the other members of any other tribe touched any of the items, they would immediately die (Numbers 4).

6. Finally, because the books of Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus were placed in the Ark of the Covenant with the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, the descendants of Aaron, the priests in his line, were responsible for the protection of the books because they were the protectors of the Ark and the Tabernacle complex.

**To continue the story,** Moses and Aaron followed the LORD and led the Nation of Israel away from Mount Sinai thirteen months after leaving Egypt, headed for the Promised Land. Even Moses did not know at that time that a disaster would happen when the 12 spies returned with the report about the Promised Land, and the Nation of Israel would rebel against the LORD and the leadership of Moses. It would take them a full year to return to Mount Sinai, where they would live for another 38 years until everyone who rebelled against the LORD had died.

Then Moses and Aaron followed the LORD and led the new generation of Israel away from Mount Sinai for the second time. Aaron would die on the journey, and his son would take his place. Finally, on the Plains of Moab, just across the Jordan River from the city of Jericho, the Nation of Israel sat ready to enter the Promised Land. Moses had recorded all the events of the last 39 years basically in the book of Numbers. In the previous 30 days, Moses reviewed and retold the law in the book of Deuteronomy.

**Upon completion of the writing and reading of Deuteronomy to the entire nation, this is what Moses did.**

*"So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests..."* (Deuteronomy 31:9)

Continuing in that same passage, Moses said, *"Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there ..."* (Deuteronomy 31:26). A full thirty-eight years after Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus were placed in the Ark of the Covenant, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were placed in the Ark.

The Ark of the Covenant was kept behind the Veil in the Tabernacle in the Holy of Holies. There, the Books of Genesis through Deuteronomy were secure under the watchful presence of the Shekinah Glory of the LORD (*the visible glowing cloud that represented the presence of the LORD*) hovering over the Mercy Seat lid on the Ark of the Covenant. Only the high priest could access these documents once

every seven years (the Sabbatical Year), at the time when they were to be taken and read aloud in the presence of all the people in the Nation of Israel.

Until 586 BC, the original writings of all the completed books of the Bible were placed in the care of the priests in the Tabernacle. Later, during the days of Solomon, the Temple was built to be a permanent house for the Ark of the Covenant. As they were written, the originals of the following books were kept by the priests of Aaron's line in the Tabernacle or Temple: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, Job, most of the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, and Micah. The rest of the books of the Old Testament will be brought back with the exiles and the priest Ezra (a descendant of Aaron), who will protect them and ultimately place them in the rebuilt Temple, behind the Veil, without the Ark of the Covenant which Jeremiah hid before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. The Ark of the Covenant was not in the Temple when Jesus was alive. It had never been in the rebuilt Temple.

### **So we come to the question,**

“If the Ark of the Covenant was hidden by Jeremiah and the Scripture was no longer available to be taken out and read every seven years, how do we know that we are reading the real WORD of God that had been stored and protected in the Ark?”

**The answer is actually found in Deuteronomy and Joshua, and it has to do with the national meeting at Mount Ebal, the installation of the SABBATICAL YEAR, and the establishment of the 48 Levitical cities!**

Upon entry into the Promised Land, the LORD and Moses had instructed Joshua to take the people to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, read the books to the nation that were stored in the Ark, and copy the text on the plaster that they were ordered to paint on the stones of the Altar on Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 27 & 28; Joshua 8). Here we have the record of the first copy of the books penned by Moses. It just so happens that the year Joshua led the nation to Mount Ebal and copied the books was a Sabbatical Year, previously unknown to man but strictly adhered to by the LORD in His work since creation.

*Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the sons of Israel, ... He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel. (Joshua 8:30-32)*

As the Nation of Israel continues to capture the Promised Land, forty-eight cities across the Promised Land, four in each tribal area, will be established as Levitical cities where the offerings of the people could be delivered to the LORD that would provide for the required offerings and the food for all the Levitical families. Levite families were forbidden to own land, cattle, crops, or anything. They were to live in donated houses that they never owned and eat meals from the offerings that were given by the other tribes of Israel. The Levites and their families lived in these Levitical cities. Every Sabbatical year, the priests of every Levitical city were required to gather the people and read the books of Moses to them so they would be without excuse concerning the Law of the LORD. To do so, each Levitical city had copies of the books of Moses. The originals of these books were stored in the Ark of the Covenant at Shiloh as long as the Ark was at that location. Thus, copies of the copies began to be made and will be made in great volumes from then on. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in a cave in 1947, we have one copy from the time of Solomon that matches perfectly all the much newer copies that our Bibles were translated from into other languages, including English.

**Now we need to address the importance of the Sabbatical Year, but that will have to wait for our next lesson in Getting to Know Your Bible – Lesson 4.**